

**Miller, Lori**

From: Burns, Francis
Sent: Friday, November 30, 2018 10:07 AM
To: R3 HOTSITES
Subject: HOTSITE REPORT: Water Emergency in Louisa County, VA

Yesterday emergency responders were called to an alleged natural gas leak at a drugstore in the Town of Louisa, VA. Suspecting that natural gas may have been trapped in the line, first responders opened a faucet to flush the line. Immediately, air monitoring equipment began to alarm. Responders checked the water lines of nearby businesses and a hydrant, and all had elevated levels of flammable gasses. Local officials evacuated approximately 1/2 mile from the area and bussed residents to a shelter. The County opened its Emergency Operations Center and had a hotline available at 540-967-3496.

As the day progressed, readings increased. Louisa County officials contacted EPA for assistance. OSC Wagner arrived on scene at approximately 8:30 pm and coordinated with Louisa officials and VDEM. VDEM performed additional monitoring. Columbia Gas was also on scene. Columbia Gas ruled out methane as the source. Nevertheless, elevated readings of flammable gasses were still detected

VDEM performed additional testing in the hot zone and found conditions had improved. A water sample was taken from the business with the highest reading and was expedited to a State lab. EPA and START prepared to take air samples; however, after midnight conditions had improved. The evacuation order was lifted at 12:40 AM.

EPA and VDEM remained on scene for several hours to assist Public Works personnel. The emergency was cleared at approximately 2:30 AM. While the evacuation order was lifted, water in the area was not cleared for use.

Water Authority and town staff have completed a full system flush and the water plant has been restarted for a system recharge. The first round of water testing is complete and lab testing by the state Division of Consolidated Lab Services show clean results. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) will review results from water sampling including a second round of testing, which are expected back by mid-morning Friday. If the second round of testing confirms that the water is clean, VDH will consult with the Authority to lift the Do Not Use order later today. Once lifted, residents will be provided with instructions for flushing their water lines in a safe manner.

Because of the gas and water issues, all Louisa County Public Schools were closed for Friday. County offices will open late at 11 AM. Town officials will determine later today if EPA assistance is still needed.